



BARACK OBAMA

44th President of the United States of America
20th January 2009



Photo Left: Supreme Court Justice John G. Roberts Swears in the 44th President of the United States.

The theme for the 2009 inauguration, "A New Birth of Freedom," commemorates the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth.



President Barack Obama took his oath of office on this burgundy velvet, gilt-edged Lincoln Inaugural Bible, becoming the first president to use it since Abraham Lincoln at his swearing-in on March 4, 1861. It is currently on display at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. (AP file)

[President Obama's Inaugural Address](#) / [Change Has Come to Whitehouse.gov](#)

[The Inauguration](#) / [Inaugural Parade Will Present a Mosaic of America](#)

[The Obama Cabinet](#) / [111th Congress](#) / [Biography - Barack Obama](#) / [Official Inaugural Book Project](#)

[Guide to the Presidential Inauguration: Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States](#)

"Today we begin in earnest the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little bit better than the one we inhabit today." - Barack Obama

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It offers abstracts of current articles from U.S. publications and by U.S. authors, highlighting significant issues in international or U.S. domestic affairs. **Views expressed in the articles cited are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect U.S. government policies.**

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President Bush Delivers His Farewell Address to the Nation – 15 January, 2009

President Bush said, "It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your President. There have been good days and tough days. But every day I have been inspired by the greatness of our country, and uplifted by the goodness of our people. I have been blessed to represent this nation we love. And I will always be honored to carry a title that means more to me than any other - citizen of the United States of America. And so, my fellow Americans, for the final time: Good night.

May God bless this house and our next President. And may God bless you and our wonderful country."

In Focus: Bush Record President Bush's Last Sunday Radio Address – 17th January, 2009

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age by Robert Gates in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2009.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense says the United States cannot expect to eliminate national security risks through higher defense budgets: the Pentagon must set priorities and consider tradeoffs. It must balance trying to prevail in today's conflicts while preparing for tomorrow's, institutionalizing counterinsurgency capabilities and maintaining its edge in conventional warfare.

ARTICLE 1

Mr Obama' First Trip by James Fullilove. Brookings, 20 January 2009.

During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama promised that in the first 100 days of his administration he would "travel to a major Islamic forum and deliver an address to redefine our struggle." Egypt, Turkey and Qatar have been suggested as possible sites for such a speech. But the best candidate is the country in which Mr. Obama lived as a child: Indonesia. Choosing Indonesia would throw light on the diversity and richness of Islam, which is not, contrary to lingering perceptions, practiced solely by Arabs or only in the Middle East. Fullilove considers the country, home to the world's largest Muslim population, does a reasonable job of managing its considerable religious heterogeneity, and that going there would help Mr. Obama to reframe the debate in the West about Islam and terrorism. And for a variety of reasons, a trip to Indonesia would indicate that Mr. Obama was serious about rebalancing America's foreign policy.

ARTICLE 2

Obama's Options for Gaza by Martin Indyk. *Brookings*, January 19, 2009.

Martin Indyk, director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, argues that there is an opportunity in the Gaza crisis for the new president to achieve a better future for Palestinians and Israelis. He believes that the immediate objective is a sustainable cease-fire, and that President Obama should urgently paint his vision of a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, summoning all leaders of goodwill to the task.

ARTICLE 3

To Win the "War on Terror," We Must First Win the "War of Ideas": Here's How by Hady Amr & Pete Singer in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, #618, July 2008.

These Brookings Fellows offer instructions for the next president to undertake initiatives in public diplomacy to reach Muslim states, believing that these initiatives should be of the highest national security importance and receive commensurate resources. To improve the deteriorating image of the United States in the Muslim world, the authors offer ten public diplomacy initiatives, including establishing American Centers across the region, bolstering cultural exchange programs, and involving the whole federal bureaucracy in public diplomacy.

ARTICLE 4

Cooling Down the New Cold War: How President Obama Should Manage Russia by Michael Idov in the *New Republic*, 9 December, 2008.

Idov offers advice to the incoming Obama administration on likely flashpoints in relations with Moscow, which since the November elections has been stepping up provocative acts. He welcomes NATO's decision to defer membership consideration for Ukraine and Georgia, and recommends that the Obama administration take a go-slow approach to this initiative and allow Russia to take a stronger role in nuclear negotiations with Iran. Idov maintains that Obama's charisma could also serve as a force multiplier for soft power, and urges President Obama to consider a tour in Russia, which could go a long way toward repairing America's image and repudiate the Kremlin's hostile rhetoric.

ARTICLE 5

Reform, Don't Merge the Homeland Security Council by Paul N. Stockton in *Washington Quarterly*, January, 2009.

Merging the Homeland Security Council into the National Security Council would impede the reforms most vital for securing the United States against future terrorist attacks and hurricanes or other natural hazards.

ARTICLE 6

Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World *National Intelligence Council*. November 2008. Note: 120p.

The report takes a long-term view of the future. It offers a look at how key global trends might develop over the next 15 years to influence world events, and a range of possibilities and potential discontinuities. Highlights include the revolution of the international system, that includes new players, Brazil, Russia, India and China, the transfer of wealth from West to East, unprecedented economic growth, coupled with 1.5 billion more people, and the potential for conflict to increase due to political turbulence in the Middle East. **ARTICLE 7**

From Great Game to Grand Bargain by Barnett Rubin & Ahmed Rashid in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/December.

The crisis in Afghanistan and Pakistan is beyond the point where more troops will help. U.S. strategy must be to seek compromise with insurgents while addressing regional rivalries and insecurities. **ARTICLE 8**

Listen to this by Podcast

The Tipping Point?: Org. International Security Report 2008 by Paul Rogers. Oxford Research Group, November 2008. 12p.

Rogers examines international security trends in relation to Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the al-Qaida movement, East-West relations after the Russian intervention in Georgia, and the probable security impact of the international economic downturn in the context of the U.S. Presidential Election result. He considers the global economic downturn is the biggest single threat to security across the world, and that on present trends many hundreds of millions of people among the poorest communities across the world will suffer most. This is likely to lead to the rise of radical and violent social movements, which will be controlled by force, further increasing the violence.

ARTICLE 9

A Time for Diplomatic Renewal: Toward a New U.S. Strategy in the Middle East by Richard Haass. *Brookings*, December 2008. 26p.

Some of the suggested initiatives will take considerable time to ripen and bear fruit, like rebuilding Palestinian capabilities, promoting political development in Arab countries, increasing energy security; whereas it may be possible or necessary to realize others relatively early on, like assembling a new diplomatic offer to Iran backed by the threat of harsher sanctions, drawing down troops in Iraq, promoting Israeli-Syrian peace. **ARTICLE 10**

Beyond Iraq by Richard Haass & Martin Indyk in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2009.

To be successful in the Middle East, the Obama administration will need to move beyond Iraq, find ways to deal constructively with Iran, and forge a final-status Israeli-Palestinian agreement. **ARTICLE 11**

Statement by the President on Agreements With Iraq Office of Press Secretary, *White House*, 30 November, 2008.

Iraq's Council of Representatives approved two agreements with the United States, a Strategic Framework Agreement and a Security Agreement, often called a *Status of Forces Agreement* or SOFA. The *Strategic Framework Agreement* sets the foundation for a long-term bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Iraq, and the *Security Agreement* addresses our presence, activities, and withdrawal from Iraq. **Strategic Framework Agreement** 8p. **Security Agreement** 24p. **ARTICLE 12**

Iran's Postmodern Beast in Gaza by Robert Kaplan in the *Atlantic*, 5 January, 2009.

According to Kaplan, Gaza, where the mullahs of Teheran hold considerable power, now constitutes the western edge of Iran's "new empire." Hamas, even if it loses against the Israelis, he says, will be able to achieve a moral victory of sorts. And, if Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement tries to replace Hamas in power, it will be tagged as "an Israeli stooge" in the eyes of Palestinians, says Kaplan. [ARTICLE 13](#)

Pacific Currents: The Responses of U.S. Allies and Security Partners in East Asia to China's Rise by Evan S. Medeiros et al. *RAND*, 24 November, 2008. Note: 309p.

China's economic, military, and diplomatic power has been on the rise, and many worry that it is nudging aside U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific region. The authors examine six specific U.S. allies and partners: Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand. They examine the responses in each nation to China's rise and assess the implications for U.S. regional security interests. The six nations see China primarily as a source of economic opportunity, but many have concerns about China's regional goals. They want China to be engaged regionally in productive ways but do not want to allow it to become dominant, finding U.S. security commitments are reassuring, so bolstering their ability to engage China with confidence. [ARTICLE 14](#)

Terrorism in India and the Global Jihad by Bruce Riedel. *Brookings*, 30 November, 2008.

The attacks on multiple targets in downtown Mumbai in late November 2008 is only the latest in a long series of horrific terrorist operations in India. Terrorism in India is a complex phenomenon with numerous perpetrators. The most dangerous terrorist menace comes from groups with intimate connections to the global jihadist network centered around Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda and its allies in the Pakistani jihadist culture, according to the author. [ARTICLE 15](#)

World at Risk: The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism by Bob Graham et al. *Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism*, 2 December, 2008. Note: 161p.

The report calls on the President-elect and the next Congress to immediately initiate several concrete actions, unilaterally and with the international community, to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that pose the greatest peril: nuclear and biological weapons. The Commission has centered its findings on several areas where it determined the risks to the United States are increasing: the crossroads of terrorism and proliferation in the poorly governed parts of Pakistan, the prevention of biological and nuclear terrorism, and the potential erosion of international nuclear security, treaties and norms as the U.S. enters a nuclear energy renaissance. [ARTICLE 16](#)

Transitioning Defense Organizational Initiatives: An Assessment of Key 2001-2008 Defense Reforms by Kathleen Hicks. *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 9 December, 2008. 84p.

Presidential transitions often bring the promise of new opportunities and the threat of reversing key advances. With this in mind, the CSIS U.S. Defense and National Security Group and the Defense-Industrial Initiatives Group examined eight years of defense reforms during the administration of George W. Bush and identified for the incoming administration (1) successful reforms to be maintained, (2) partially successful reforms to be improved, (3) and failed experiments to be halted. The study team focused on the Defense Department's internal operations in the categories of strategic direction, force development, force employment, force management, and corporate support, and sought to inform the next Secretary of Defense's transition team of its decisions. [ARTICLE 17](#)

The United States and Southeast Asia: Toward a Strategy for Enhanced Cooperation by Derek Mitchell. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 8 December, 2008. 33p.

The conference report includes presentations from seven Southeast Asian countries, as well as senior U.S. government officials, diplomats and nongovernment specialists in Southeast Asian Affairs. The topics covered are the United States' role in Southeast Asia, trends in ASEAN affairs, shifting external power dynamics in Southeast Asia, and the status of U.S. alliances and emerging partnerships in the region. [ARTICLE 18](#)

Normalization of Economic Relations: Consequences for Iran's Economy and the United States by Dean A. DeRosa & Gary Clyde Hufbauer. *National Foreign Trade Council*, December 2008. 44p.

If the United States lifted sanctions on Iran and the nation liberalized its economic regime, the world price of oil could fall by 10% and Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) could increase by 23% annually, according to this paper which was written based on the assumption that U.S. sanctions currently in place are lifted, and that Iran adopts more open policies toward foreign investment and expands other dimensions of its economy.

ARTICLE 19

How Soon is Safe?: Iraqi Force Development and "Conditions-Based" U.S. Withdrawals by Anthony H. Cordesman & Adam Mausner. Center for Strategic International Studies, 1 December, 2008. Note: 185p.

The U.S. and Iraq now face a transition period that may well be as challenging as defeating the insurgency, Al Qa'ida in Iraq, and the threat from militias like the Mahdi Army. A combination of Iraq's internal politics and outside pressure from nations like Iran has created serious tensions between the U.S. and Iraqi government over the status of U.S. forces and the timetable for U.S. withdrawal. Iraqi politics and public opinion see the U.S. as an occupation force. Iraq's Kurds are the only group in Iraq that showed a consistent desire for the U.S. to stay. The history of states facing a predicament similar to Iraq's present position, however, shows that time and patience can be critical assets.

ARTICLE 20

Tennis Shoes and Stolen Toilets: Russia's Military Renaissance by Reuben Johnson in the *Weekly Standard*, Vol. 14, no. 10, 24 November, 2008.

While Russia has announced several grandiose plans to restore its military in recent years, economic realities, specifically its overdependence on energy exports, assuring that these lavish promises are unlikely to materialize, President Medvedev has announced increases in military spending, these sums being dwarfed by defense spending in the U.S. and Europe and will be largely absorbed in maintaining its existing assets. Russia's success in its August 2008 conflict in Georgia was the result of superior numbers, says the author, who relates anecdotes of Russian troops wearing sneakers into battle and their awe at the sight of Georgia's U.S.-built military facilities. Johnson believes that the wasteful naval maneuvers in Venezuela and a recent accident aboard a next-generation nuclear submarine also reflect the massive economic, political, intelligence and administrative chasms that Russian defense policymakers will need to bridge in the coming years.

ARTICLE 21

Georgia Without the Spin by Charles King in *Foreign Policy*, 20 November, 2008.

The author, faculty chair at Georgetown's Walsh School of Foreign Service, takes a hard look at the August 2008 Georgia crisis, coming away with strong criticism for the brinkmanship style of Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. While granting no allowances for Russia's actions, King argues that new revelations about Georgian actions in the lead-up to the conflict complicate the narrative championed by many policymakers in Washington. "None of the sides remains blameless," writes the author, "but in light of this new information, it is now clear that for U.S. President-elect Barack Obama, constraining Georgia will be a task no less important than containing Russia."

ARTICLE 22

Zimbabwe: International Organizations Call for End to Abductions of Activists. *Human Rights Watch*, 10 December, 2008.

The human rights groups came together to call on regional and international organizations to take strong action to protect those who fight for human rights in Zimbabwe. The abduction of activists is taking place at a time when the country is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, including a cholera outbreak and severe food shortages for which the government is seeking international help.

ARTICLE 23

Chinese Corporate Governance: History and Institutional Framework by Yong Kang et al. *RAND*, 4 December, 2008. 62p.

The Chinese economy has been growing rapidly in recent years, as the nation has moved toward a stronger role for private enterprise and capitalism. As China has aligned itself more closely with the international economy, it has also sought to adopt more Western-style oversight mechanisms and legal standards concerning the operation of its corporations. Corporate governance is critically important to a country's economic growth and

stability, because it provides the credibility and confidence in management that is fundamental to capital markets. The study provides an overview of corporate governance mechanisms in China. [**ARTICLE 24**](#)

Nonproliferation: U.S. Agencies Have Taken Some Steps, But More Effort is Needed to Strengthen and Expand the Proliferation Security Initiative GAO, November 2008. 57p.

The *Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)* is a multinational effort to prevent the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction as well as related delivery systems and material to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Although PSI activities are increasingly focused on law enforcement issues, it says State and agencies such as the FBI and the Coast Guard have only some PSI structure in place, and, only the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency has written guidance establishing its roles and responsibilities. It recommends fixing this. It also says the State and Defense Departments should take steps to increase cooperation and coordination between the United States and certain PSI nations. [**ARTICLE 25**](#)

Global Democracy Promotion: Seven Lessons for the New Administration by David Price in *Washington Quarterly*, January, 2009.

The chair of the House Democracy Assistance Commission, mindful of the mistakes of the past, offers seven practical lessons for the new administration to rethink and refine the theory and practice of democracy promotion. [**ARTICLE 26**](#)

Some International Relations online resources which may be of interest:

Pacific Currents: The Responses of U.S. Allies and Security Partners in East Asia to China's Rise RAND, 2008 . Note:309p. [**News release**](#) 17 November, 2008.

e-journals on Asian and Pacific studies

Convention on Cluster Munitions Opens for Signature Taken question, U.S. Dept of State, 2 December'08.

U.S. Diplomacy in the Americas: A Conversation with the Diplomatic Corps U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Thomas A. Shannon & U.S. Ambassadors to western hemisphere countries, 5 December, 2008.

The Absence of Europe: Implications for National Security by Steven Philip Kramer, *NDU*, October 2008.

NATO's Uncertain Future: Is Demography Destiny? by Jeffrey Simon. *NDU*, October 2008.

Challenges to Persian Gulf Security: How Should the United States Respond? by Judith Yaphe. *NDU*, November, 2008.

Statement by U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., at the EcoPartnerships signing during the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue 4 December, 2008.

U.S. fact sheet, "Energy and Environment Accomplishments", and a U.S.-China joint fact sheet, "Ten Year Energy and Environment Cooperation"

U.S. and China Announce \$20 Billion in Finance Facilities That Will Create up to \$38 Billion in Annual Trade Finance to Assist Global Trade 5 December, 2008.

Chinese Corporate Governance: History and Institutional Framework RAND, 2008. 62p. [**Brief Summary**](#)

Restoring the Balance: A Middle East Strategy for the Next President by Richard N. Haass & Martin S. Indyk, *Brookings*, 2008. [**A summary**](#) Note: 288p.

Iran Annotated bibliography with hyperlinks, by *Muir S. Fairchild Research Info. Center*, November 2008.

Pakistan Annotated bibliography with hyperlinks, by *Muir S. Fairchild Research Info. Center*, September 2008.

Statement by President Bush on Zimbabwe 9 December, 2008.

Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers Genocide Prevention Task Force, December 2008. Note: 174p. Final report - Genocide Prevention Task Force, chaired by Madeleine K. Albright & William S. Cohen.

Defense Transformation President Bush, *U.S. Military Academy, West Point*, 9 Dec'08. **White House fact sheet**

Evaluating Iraq's Provincial Reconstruction Teams While Drawdown Looms: a USIP Trip Report by Rusty Barber & Sam Parker. *U.S. Institute of Peace*, December 2008.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act Backgrounder by Stephanie Hanson. *CFR*, 5 December, 2008.

Counterterrorism in India Backgrounder by Eben Kaplan & Jayshree Bajoria. *CFR*, 27 November, 2008.

Nepal: Political Developments and Bilateral Relations with the United States *CRS*, 23 October, 2008.

Iraq Needs U.S. Shield for Democracy to Work - The U.S. role in Iraq must be compared with that of South Korea or Taiwan, not Vietnam.

Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress *CRS*, 28 Oct'08.

U.S.- Vietnam Relations: Background and Issues for Congress *CRS*, 31 October, 2008.

U.S.- Bahrain Gulf Security Dialogue. Fact sheet, *U.S. Dept of State*, 24 November, 2008.

Treasury Designates Mugabe Regime Cronies: Statement *U.S. Dept of the Treasury*, 25 November, 2008.

Afghanistan: Government Formation and Performance *CRS*, 14 November, 2008.

Saudi Arabia and the Future of Afghanistan Backgrounder by Greg Bruno. *CFR*, 11 December, 2008.

El Salvador: Political, Economic, and Social Conditions and U.S. Relations *CRS*, 18 November, 2008.

Building Language Skills and Cultural Competencies in the Military: DOD's Challenge in Today's Educational Environment Report by a *Subcommittee of the U.S. House Committee on Armed Services*, November 2008. Note: 125p. **News Release** **November 2008 GAO report** on this topic.

North Korea: Terrorism List Removal? *CRS*, 6 November, 2008.

Maritime Security

Ocean Piracy and its Impact on Insurance *CRS*, 3 December, 2008.

New Cargo Security Reg. for Maritime Carriers and Importers *U.S. Dept Homeland Security*, 24 Nov'08.

Anti-Piracy Initiatives Should Reflect U.S. Maritime Interests by Jena Baker McNeill. *Heritage*, 21 Nov'08.

Maritime Security Primer: Global Maritime Security Cooperation in an Age of Terrorism and Transnational Threats at Sea Multilateral Planners Conference VI, Copenhagen, May 13-15, 2008.

Terrorism

Terrorists Attacking Mumbai Have Global Agenda - Pakistan's LeT, not as well known as Al Qaeda, threatens India, the West and Pakistan itself.

Lessons from Mumbai: Assessing Armed Assault Threats to the United States - Effective counterterrorism, intelligence, and information-sharing programs are the best way to prevent organized conspiracies from undertaking armed assaults, using vehicle-borne explosives, etc.

Thinking About Preventing and Preparing For Terrorist Attacks - How should policymakers seek both to prevent terrorist attacks and prepare for them? Two *RAND Corporation* papers respond to these questions.

POLITICS

New Member Pictorial Directory - 111th Congress New Member Orientation, 20 November, 2008. 30p.

Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile CRS, 31 December, 2008. 10p.

Achieving Real Improvement in Federal Policy and Program Outcomes: The Next Frontier by Kathryn Newcomer & F. Stevens Redburn. *National Academy of Public Administration and the George Washington University*, October 2008. 11p.

A new Administration eager to successfully implement its policy goals has the challenge of quickly identifying what is worth retaining and what is not of the performance management procedures established by the previous Administration. It also has an opportunity to redeploy the assets it inherits and draw lessons from recent experience about what will be most effective in achieving Presidential priorities. **ARTICLE 27**

Ethics Laws and Rules for Departing Members and Staff *Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, U.S. House of Representatives*, 20 November, 2008. 3p.

As the 110th Congress drew to a close, this document highlights some of the ethics laws and rules that apply to departing Members and their staffs. **ARTICLE 28**

An Agenda for Strengthening Our Nation's Democracy: Conference Report & Policy Recommendations by Stuart Comstock -Gay et al. *America Speaks*, November 2008. 22p.

The authors regard the report as a practical agenda for addressing the increasing loss of peoples' trust in the systems of politics and governance. Advocates, scholars, and thinkers outline a broad agenda for democracy reform. In order to encourage the maximum levels of voter turnout, to practice people-centered governance, and to seek and genuinely value everyone's participation, an infrastructure of participation and governance that welcomes everyone needs to be built. **ARTICLE 29**

Inside the Presidency by Elisabeth Bumiller in *National Geographic*, January 2009.

Although the occupant of the White House changes, most of the routines for the staff that assist the president stay the same. Bumiller gives an inside look at life in the White House or on the road with the president; she interviews Gary Walters, former chief usher of the Executive Mansion, who served as a manager of the White House for 31 years, spanning six presidencies. A staff of 90, including butlers, maids, chefs, elevator operators, florists, carpenters and electricians, runs the White House residence, which has been known to welcome up to 30,000 guests in a single week. **ARTICLE 30**

Presidential Transition Briefs: Policy Options for the Obama Administration to Address Poverty, Hunger, and Injustice. *Oxfam America*, 2008. 25p.

Policy options for the Obama Administration to address poverty, hunger, and injustice. **ARTICLE 31**

Indian Nations and the 2008 Presidential Transition by John Dossett. *National Congress of American Indians*, 17 October, 2008. 47p.

Indian Nations are sovereign governments, recognized under treaties and the U.S. Constitution. Yet tribal government issues have suffered from inattention during the transition and early years of many prior Administrations. If appointments and major policy decisions are delayed for extended periods, the long term issues in Indian country are left unaddressed and handed on to the next Administration. Dossett reminds that any significant reform efforts must be planned during the transition and start at the beginning of an Administration if they are to succeed. The report offers suggestions to the presidential transition team on American Indian issues. **ARTICLE 32**

Thinking About Tomorrow by Andrew J. Rettenmaier & Thomas R. Saving. *National Center for Policy Analysis*, December 2008. 16p.

If the federal government stopped Medicare and Social Security programs tomorrow, collecting no more payroll taxes and allowing no more accrual of benefits, it would still owe up to \$52 trillion to those who have already earned these benefits, according to the authors. To put the numbers in perspective, the size of the entire U.S. economy is \$14 trillion. If Medicare and Social Security continue on their current course, the obligations of taxpayers will grow. In the spring, the Social Security/Medicare trustees reported that if Social Security and Medicare were to continue indefinitely, the present value of the unfunded obligation is \$101.7 trillion, or seven times the size of the national economy.

ARTICLE 33

Breaking Down Walls: Overcoming Institutional Barriers to Infrastructure Investment by Anthony E. Shorris. *Century Foundation*, 24 November, 2008. 26p.

A political consensus has developed in the United States that significantly increased spending on the nation's aged infrastructure is necessary for America to remain prosperous. President-elect Barack Obama and the new congressional leadership have promised to push for major new investments in the nation's transportation networks, water systems, broadband capabilities, electrical grid, and other public facilities. While supporting those investments, a new report makes clear that there are serious institutional barriers to the effective use of those funds that have to be overcome if new dollars are to be used wisely.

ARTICLE 34

Human Rights at Home: A Domestic Policy Blueprint for the New Administration by Catherine Powell. *American Constitution Society for Law and Policy*, October 2008. 44p.

As a new Administration takes office in January 2009, it will have an opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen the longstanding commitment of the United States to human rights at home and abroad. This commitment is one that has been expressed throughout U.S. history, by leaders from both parties, according to Catherine Powell. An overwhelming majority of Americans strongly embrace the notion of human rights as the idea that every person has basic rights regardless of whether or not the government recognizes those rights.

ARTICLE 35

Disability Policy Recommendations for the Presidential Transition and the 111th Congress. *Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities*. 17 November, 2008. 47p.

Intended as a resource for policy-makers, this transition document conveys the major issues facing the new Administration and Congress for people with disabilities and their families and Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)'s recommended solutions. The document also lists those Administration positions subject to Presidential appointment which are critical to people with disabilities and which should be filled with individuals with a disability perspective.

ARTICLE 36

PETA's Two-Point Plan for the Presidential Transition Team. *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals*, December 2008.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) recommends the creation of two national councils, a National Food Policy Council and a National Toxicity Council, to work toward improving the government's record on food and toxicology policy.

ARTICLE 37

Winds of Political Change Haven't Shifted Public's Ideology Balance by Juliana Horowitz. *Pew Research*, 25 November, 2008.

The Democratic Party's advantage in party identification has widened over the past two decades, but the share of Americans who describe their political views as liberal, conservative or moderate has remained stable during the same period. Only about one-in-five Americans currently call themselves liberal (21%), while 38% say they are conservative, and 36% describe themselves as moderate. This is virtually unchanged from recent years; when George W. Bush was first elected president, 18% of Americans said they were liberal, 36% were conservative and 38% considered themselves moderate.

ARTICLE 38

Some Political online resources which may be of interest:

The First Day of a New Congress: A Guide to Proceedings on the House Floor CRS, 31 October, 2008.

The First Day of a New Congress: A Guide to Proceedings on the Senate Floor CRS, 29 October, 2008.

Winds of Political Change Haven't Shifted Public's Ideology Balance Pew Research, 25 November, 2008.

GovTwit Directory, November 20, 2008 – government entities (federal, state, local and non-U.S.) using Twitter or other social media

Treasury's Approach Toward Combating Kleptocracy Remarks by U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Patrick O'Brien, 1 December, 2008.

Corruption Most Foul: Revisiting the Timeless Principles of Corruption in Politics - Who is to blame for acts of corruption? The guilty officials are the people we must hold culpable. Yet, the citizenry also bears its share of the rap once a culture of corruption develops because they have tolerated it.

TRANSITION – See also our e-spotlite - Transition To Power

Presidential Transition Act: Provisions and Funding CRS, 30 October, 2008.

The President-Elect: Succession and Disability Issues During Transition Period CRS, 26 Nov'08.

Timothy Geithner, U.S. Treasury Secretary nominee Backgrounder by Joanna Klonsky. CFR, 25 Nov'08.

Serving People in Need, Safeguarding Religious Freedom: Recommendations for the New Administration on Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations If it is impossible not to admire and respect the contributions of our religious communities, it is also important to bear in mind that government's task is to promote good works, not religion itself. Spreading the faith is the task of believers, not government.

Obama and the Human Rights Movement at 60 Sarah Mendelson, director of the CSIS Human Rights and Security Initiative, reflects on what the Obama administration can do to make it more than an aspirational document. (text and audio)

Transition Tracker: Fix the Tax System Brookings' Bill Gale says that in the midst of the continuing financial crisis, President-elect Obama still has enormous opportunities to reform the tax code, and he should start with energy and health care. (video)

Transforming and Improving American Education: A Memo to President-elect Obama Specifically, your Administration should pursue the following actions: Reform federal K-12 education programs to encourage state and local reform and facilitate greater parental choice; End ineffective, wasteful, or duplicative education programs; Protect and expand school choice in Washington, D.C.; Fix ineffective federal early childhood education programs rather than adding new ones. Call attention to the real engines of reform: the power of parents and successful reform models at the state and local levels.

Memo to the President: Redefine America's Global Development Cooperation - Your commitment to embrace the Millennium Development Goals and make them America's goals is a useful point of departure for renewed global cooperation on development. Additionally, you are now positioned to follow through on additional global development commitments you have made.

Polls

What Now? Your Inaugural Speech - Mr. President, it would be wonderful if you deliver a great inaugural address. But if you don't, take comfort: very few of your predecessors did. In fact, as the history books often point out, the inaugural address that had the most immediate effect was certainly one of the worst...

Half of Youth Say Barack Obama's Election Makes Them Feel Hopeful: Two-thirds of teens say his election is more important than both the last Harry Potter book and the intro of the iPod - as we head into his inauguration, half of youth aged 8-18 (49%) say his election makes them feel hopeful. Two in five youth (43%) say the election of Obama makes them feel happy and 41% say they feel excited about it.

Strong Confidence in Obama - Country Seen as Less Politically Divided: America's Pre-Inauguration Mood - Public confidence in Barack Obama to deal with the nation's most pressing problems is high, with seven-in-ten saying they are confident that he will do the right thing when it comes to fixing the economy, preventing terrorism, and dealing with Iraq.

Three in Five Adults Give President-Elect Obama Positive Marks for Transition Handling - Three in five Americans say Economy is most important issue to address and only one in five believe the country is going in the right direction now -

Obama Wins 83% Approval Rating for Transition - President-elect Barack Obama receives a remarkably high 83% approval rating for the way in which he has handled the presidential transition, significantly higher than the approval level for either of his immediate predecessors just before they first took office.

Most Admired Men and Women of 2008

Some Final Thoughts on Campaign '08 From the beginning of the campaign to its conclusion, Democrats consistently expressed more interest in election news than did Republicans.

Optimistic Expectation For Change, Only a Third of the Public Thinks Obama Will be Too Liberal, Most People Expect Less Gridlock While about a third (35%) of all adults, including 74% of Republicans and 33% of Independents, fear that the Obama administration will be too liberal – most people do not believe this. The poll also finds that a 59% to 12% majority expects that there will be less gridlock in Washington under a newly elected Democratic president and a Democratically-controlled Congress.

AEI Political Report November/December, 2008.

Government & Public Administration

Free on Friday by Zach Patton in *Governing*, November 2008.

Most Americans work five-day work weeks, eight hours a day. But in an effort to save operating costs and counter high gas prices, many local governments are adopting four-day work weeks, with employees working ten-hour days. In August, Utah became the first state to implement what is known as a "4/10" schedule. The state has decided to try the schedule for a year, and many state and local governments are watching to see how this schedule works. Already the state has saved significant energy costs and has seen a decline in absenteeism. A survey found that 80% of the state's employees like the new schedule. **ARTICLE 39**

Human Rights / Global Issues

Progress in Global Measles Control and Mortality Reduction 2000-2007 Center for Disease Control, 5 December, 2008.

During 2007, further progress was made toward achieving the 2010 global measles mortality reduction goal of a 90% reduction in measles mortality compared with 2000. **ARTICLE 40**

25 Years Later: The AIDS Vaccine Search Goes On by David Watkins in *Scientific American*, October 2008.

Repeated failures in the quest for an AIDS vaccine have sent investigators back to the drawing board. Researchers are already returning to basic science to follow new leads. **ARTICLE 41**

Presidential Proclamation of Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week 2008: White House proclamation 9 December, 2008.

Troubles Plague U.N. Human Rights Council Backgrounder by Lauren Vriens. *CFR*, 9 December, 2008.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Congressional Issues CRS, 28 October, 2008.

TRADE / ECONOMY

Remarks: President-Elect Obama to Economic Recovery Advisory Board C-SPAN, 26 Nov'08. 2p.

The Great Crash, 2008 by Roger C. Altman in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2009.

The economic collapse of 2008 is a major geopolitical setback for the West, calling into serious question the credibility of western governments. Altman considers that it may precipitate an eastward shift of power.

[Listen to this essay via Podcast](#) **[ARTICLE 42](#)**

Be Nice to the Country That Lends You Money by James Fallows in *The Atlantic*, December.

The man who oversees \$200 billion of China's \$2 trillion dollar holdings explains why he is betting against the dollar, praises America's pragmatism, and wonders about huge Wall Street checks, offers a friendly piece of advice.

[ARTICLE 43](#)

How Much Risk is Acceptable? *Center for Retirement Research* at Boston College, 19 November, 2008. 9p.

The financial crisis has sparked proposals to reform the retirement income system. One component of such a system could be a new tier of retirement accounts. These accounts would augment declining Social Security replacement rates for low-wage workers and provide a buffer of security for middle- and upper-wage workers who, increasingly, will rely totally on 401(k) plans to supplement their Social Security. The brief takes the first step in exploring the question of how much risk is acceptable.

[ARTICLE 44](#)

So, You Want to Save the Economy? Inside the Influential New World of Econobloggers by Stephen Mihm in the *Boston Globe*, 7 December, 2008.

As the financial disaster unfolded on Wall Street, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson pressed Congress to pass the bailout plan but provided sparse justification for how he would spend the money. Mihm notes that a disparate range of experts in economics and finance, including some well-known individuals, starting picking apart Paulson's plan live, on the Internet, in public blogs.

[ARTICLE 45](#)

It's Not Just the Economy: Tackling the Crisis of Global Order by Bruce Jones et al. *Brookings*, 9 December, 2008.

The heads of state of the world's twenty leading economies came together in November to begin the process of enhancing the ability of international financial institutions to ensure the stability of capital markets. The leaders were spurred to action by the deepest crisis of the global economy since the Great Depression. President-elect Obama has written incisively that protecting American security depends on promoting global security. The international response to the election shows a pent-up demand for U.S. leadership, and forging effective cooperation against transnational threats is the leadership challenge of our time.

[ARTICLE 46](#)

Economic Projections for the U.S., Japan & Euro Area by Jorgen Elmeskov. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development*, 23 November, 2008.

Economic activity is expected to fall by 0.9% in the U.S. next year, by 0.5% in the Euro area and by 0.1% in Japan as *OECD* countries enter a protracted slowdown, according to latest projections. As a high degree of uncertainty surrounds the outlook, much depends on the depth and duration of the financial crisis. Elmeskov says that inflation should continue to ease as economic slack puts downward pressure on prices and if, commodity prices maintain their recent lower levels.

[ARTICLE 47](#)

Economic Globalization: A Challenge for Official Statistics *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*, 7 December, 2008. Note: 247p.

The seminar provided national statistical offices with a forum to share ideas and discuss approaches to cope with the distortions caused by the activities of multinational enterprises on the production of statistics. It also addressed globalization in the context of national accounts and the effect on gross domestic product, gross national income and other parts of the accounts. Presentations at the seminar were provided by the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Eurostat, *UNECE*, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom. **ARTICLE 48**

Commodities Market Speculation: The Risk to Food Security and Agriculture Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 19 November, 2008. 15p.

Excessive speculation in agriculture commodity markets has played a major role in the rapid rise and fall in global food prices, contributing to a massive increase in undernourished people and commodity market instability. The United Nations concludes that global food prices rose an estimated 85% between April 2007 and April 2008. Prices rose for wheat (60%), corn (30%) and soybeans (40%) beyond what could be explained by supply, demand and other fundamental factors. **ARTICLE 49**

Warning: More Doom Ahead by Nouriel Roubini in *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2009.

Roubini, Professor of economics at New York University's Stern School of Business, writes that "last year's worst-case scenarios came true," and that the global financial pandemic that he and others had warned about has arrived. This year portends the credit crunch getting worse, and that the U.S. will experience its worst recession in decades, and some developing economies will experience a full-blown financial crisis, and may need external financing to avoid a meltdown. He also notes that drastic actions in the last year by the G-7 and others averted a total systemic meltdown, but that "the worst is not behind us ... only very aggressive, coordinated, and effective action by policymakers will ensure that 2010 will not be even worse than 2009 is likely to be." This is the 1st of a 5-article series in this issue of FP magazine, called "*The Worst is Yet to Come*" **ARTICLE 50**

Some Trade/Economics online resources which may be of interest:

A New Trade Policy for the United States. A Memorandum to the President-Elect of the United States and to the 111th Congress Trade Policy Study Group, 25 November, 2008.

Roots of the 2008 Financial Crisis The participants, among the nation's best deal makers, were in a peculiar position. They weren't allowed to negotiate. Mr. Paulson requested that each of them sign. It was for their own good and the good of the country, he said, according to a person in the room.

The Global Financial Crisis and the IMF's Response Address by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Mark Sobel, 2 December, 2008.

The U.S. Economy and Financial System Remarks, U.S. Secretary of Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., 1 December, 2008.

The Crisis and the Policy Response Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, U.S. Federal Reserve, in London, 13 January'09.

Review of the Financial Market Crisis and the Troubled Assets Relief Program Address by U.S. Interim Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Neel Kashkari, 13 January, 2009.

The U.S. Economic Outlook: The Aftermath of Leverage Thomas M. Hoenig, President, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, 7 January, 2009.

The Recession in Perspective Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, January 2009 (comparisons with previous U.S. recessions).

The State of American Business 2009 U.S. Chamber of Commerce, January 2009. 42p.

Treasury Releases Congressional Report on Emergency Economic Stabilization Act U.S. Dept of the Treasury, 6 January, 2009. The report - **Section 105(a) of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act**

Financial Crisis Resources – a compilation by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia “on how the Fed, the U.S. Treasury, and others are responding during the current financial situation.”

Assessing the Potential for Instability in Financial Markets Speech by Randall S. Kroszner, a governor of the U.S. Federal Reserve, in Geneva, 8 December, 2008.

The Year of Stimulus by Lee Hudson Teslik. *CFR*, 6 January 6, 2009 (includes predicted GDP changes in 2009).

Thinking about Tomorrow Paper by Andrew J. Rettenmaier and Thomas R. Saving. National Center for Policy Analysis, December 2008. 16p. This paper looks at U.S. federal government liabilities under the Social Security and Medicare programs.
News Release, “**Medicare, Social Security Owe up to \$52 Trillion to Current Retirees and Workers**”

Statement, U.S. Interim Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Neel Kashkari before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, 4 December, 2008 (update on U.S. Treasury Department’s actions to work through the financial crisis and restore the flow of credit to the economy).

Estimates of Federal Tax Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2008-2012 Report by the staff of the *Joint Committee on Taxation*, U.S. Congress, 31 October, 2008. 77p.

Economic Empowerment in Strategic Regions: 2008 Year-End Summary Fact sheet, *U.S. Dept of State*, 2 December, 2008. (*Economic Empowerment in Strategic Regions – EESR* – is a job-creation initiative for conflict countries).

FDIC Study of Bank Overdraft Programs. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), November 2008. 120p. **Summary** 5p. **Brief summary**

Japan’s New Economic Challenge Briefing by Sheila A. Smith. *CFR*, 25 November, 2008.

U.S.-China Economic Relations Remarks by U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., 2 Dec’08.

U.S. Trade and Investment Relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa: The African Growth and Opportunity Act and Beyond *CRS*, 28 October, 2008.

Restoring Financial Intermediation by Banks: The Role of Regulators Speech by Donald L. Kohn, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, 8 December, 2008.

Update on the TARP Program by U.S. Interim Assistant Sec. of the Treasury Neel Kashkari, 8 Dec’08.

Remarks by U.S. Interim Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Stability Neel Kashkari, on progress in implementing the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) at *Brookings*, 8 January, 2009.

Financial Regulation: A Framework for Crafting and Assessing Proposals to Modernize the Outdated U.S. Financial Regulatory System *GAO*, January 2009. Note: 107p.

New National Survey Reveals Escalating Budget Crisis for States - *National Conference of State Legislatures*, 4 December, 2008.

The Community Reinvestment Act and the Recent Mortgage Crisis Speech by Randall S. Kroszner, a Governor of the U.S. Federal Reserve, 3 December, 2008.

Business Dynamics Statistics New annual statistical series - Census Bureau “describes establishment-level business dynamics including firm age and firm size” and provides researchers with a way to gain insight into the dynamics of a changing economy. **News Release** 2 December, 2008.

Persistent Housing Market Weakness Causes Thrift Industry Loss in Third Quarter of 2008 News release, *Office of Thrift Supervision*, 20 November, 2008.

NFTC Releases Analysis of 2008 Congressional Election Results and Their Impact on U.S. Trade Policy News release, *National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC)*, November 17, 2008. **Report**

Report on the Economic Crisis: Initial Impact on Hospitals American Hospital Assn, November 2008. 11p.
News Release

Emergency Economic Stabilization Act: Preliminary Analysis of Oversight Provisions CRS, 31 Oct'08.

The U.S. Financial Crisis: The Global Dimension with Implications for U.S. Policy CRS, 18 Nov'08.

SEC Approves Measures to Strengthen Oversight of Credit Rating Agencies SEC news release, 3 December, 2008. **Fact Sheet**

When Giants Fall: Shutdown of One or More U.S. Automakers Could Eliminate Up to 3.3 Million U.S. Jobs Briefing paper by Robert E. Scott. *Economic Policy Institute*, 3 December, 2008. 14p.

U.S. Economic Growth Will Be Weak in 2009, Chicago Fed Economic Outlook Symposium Participants Say *Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago*, 8 December, 2008.

Oversight Concerns Regarding Treasury Department Conduct of the Troubled Assets Relief Program
Hearing before the *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*, 10 December, 2008.

Iceland's Financial Crisis CRS, 20 November, 2008.

Raising Capital: The Role of Sovereign Wealth Funds by Anna L. Paulson. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, *Chicago Fed Letter*, January 2009.

Monetary Policy and the Federal Reserve: Current Policy and Conditions CRS, 29 October, 2008.

Automobile Industry

The State of the Domestic Auto Industry: Part II. Hearing before the *U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs*, December 4, 2008 (note: there was a hearing before the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services on December 5)

H.R. 7321, Auto Industry Financing and Restructuring Act Cost estimate by Congressional Budget Office, 11 December, 2008. **Full Text** 7p.

S.3175, Auto Industry Emergency Bridge Loan Act and Draft Legislation: letter by Robert A. Sunshine, Acting director, Congressional Budget Office, 5 December, 2008. 7p.

Review of Industry Plans to Stabilize the Financial Condition of the American Automobile Industry
Hearing before the *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*, December 5, 2008.

Auto Industry Stabilization Plan: Chrysler Submission *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*, December, 2008.

Auto Industry Stabilization Plan: Ford Submission *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*, 2 December, 2008.

Auto Industry Stabilization Plan: GM Submission *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*, 2 Dec'08.

Alternative Proposals to Provide \$34 Billion in Loans to the Automobile Industry Letter by Robert A. Sunshine, acting director, *Congressional Budget Office*, 5 December, 2008. 3p.

ENVIRONMENT/ENERGY

International Climate Change Programs: Lessons Learned from the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme and the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism *U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)*, 2 December, 2008. 69p.

International policies to address climate change have largely relied on market-based programs; for example, under the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) phase I (2005 to 2007) carbon dioxide emissions reductions were sought by setting a cap on each member state's allowable emissions and distributing tradeable allowances to covered entities, such as power plants. Beginning operation in 2002, the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has relied on offsets, allowing certain industrialized nations to pay for emission reduction projects in developing countries, where the cost of abatement may be less expensive, in addition to reducing emissions within their borders. Legislative proposals to limit greenhouse gas emissions are under consideration in the United States.

ARTICLE 51

How Obama Should Confront Climate Change by William J. Antholis & Bryan K. Mignone. *Brookings*, 2 December, 2008.

The days of the global warming deniers are long gone. The new era will be defined by how well Obama navigates, and ultimately defuses, a complex congressional minefield. Because the best policy is a lasting one, climate enthusiasts would do well to look toward the political center.

ARTICLE 52

Think Again: Climate Change by Bill McKibben in *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2009.

McKibben writes that it may be too late to avert climate change, but that it is imperative that the international political order stop delaying and adopt the few options humanity has left. He notes that there is no doubt left among the scientific community that global warming is a reality and that solving the climate crisis is no longer an option, as human activities have already raised the global temperature by a degree; all we can do is mitigate its worst aspects. Coordinating this effort with every country on earth will be "far and away the biggest foreign-policy challenge we face."

ARTICLE 53

Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol by Frank Biermann & Ingrid Boas in *Environment*, November/December.

The authors believe that climate change will continue to bring rising sea levels, increasing the frequency and intensity of storms, and worsening drought – effects that may force many poor people in developing countries to leave their homes. They review this problem and what can be done to address this plight before the crisis hits.

ARTICLE 54

Superfund National Accomplishments Summary Fiscal Year 2008. *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*, 20 November, 2008.

The *EPA* continues to make progress in cleaning up America's most contaminated hazardous waste sites and making them ready for productive use. It's annual summary of the Superfund program's accomplishments shows that construction was completed at 30 sites in 2008, for a cumulative total of 1,060 sites or approximately 67% of the sites on the National Priorities List. Superfund is the federal government program that cleans up the most serious hazardous waste sites across the country.

ARTICLE 55

The Place We Live, the Heath We Have: A Multi-Level, Life Course Perspective on the Effects of Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Poverty on Health and Racial Health Disparities by D. Phuong Do. *RAND*, 2008. 119p.

The author investigates the relationship between metropolitan-level segregation measures and individual-level health outcomes; distinguishes between transient and persistent exposure to individual and neighborhood poverty in estimating individual and neighborhood poverty effects on health and racial health disparities; and estimates the causal impact of neighborhood disadvantage on health. He finds that racial and economic segregation detrimentally affects the health of blacks, even after adjustment of individual socioeconomic factors, but its effects on health for whites are either neutral or beneficial.

ARTICLE 56

Chemical Security 101: What You Don't Have Can't Leak, Or Be Blown Up by a Terrorist Center for American Progress, November 2008. 57p.

Most of the U.S.'s 101 most dangerous chemical facilities could become less attractive terrorist targets by converting to alternative chemicals or processes. The study claims that doing so would improve the safety and security of more than 80 million Americans living within range of a worst-case toxic gas release from one of these facilities. Millions more living near railroads and highways used for transporting hazardous chemicals would also be safer and more secure.

[ARTICLE 57](#)

The U.S. Government's Methane to Markets Partnership Accomplishments EPA, Nov'08. 28p.

International leadership by the United States to reduce emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is highlighted in the report. Current U.S. supported M2M projects, when fully implemented, will deliver estimated annual emissions reductions tripling the reductions achieved in 2006. M2M reduces greenhouse gas emissions by recovering methane, also a primary component of natural gas, from agricultural waste, coal mines, landfills, and oil and gas systems and using it as clean energy.

[ARTICLE 58](#)

More Variable and Uncertain Water Supply: Global Warming's Wake-Up Call for the Southeastern United States. National Wildlife Federation, November 2008. 8p.

The second major drought of the last decade is a wake-up call for the Southeast United States, showing the region's vulnerability due to its reliance on scarce supplies of fresh water. The region has been operating under the best-case water availability for the last 50 years, during which drought conditions were relatively rare. But, the region has historically experienced regular droughts. Global warming is the future wildcard, potentially causing both more extremely dry periods and more heavy rainfall events.

[ARTICLE 59](#)

The True Cost of Coal. Greenpeace, 1 December, 2008. 92p.

The global cost of coal was at least €360 billion in 2007 alone. The figure arrives from CO2 damage costs, health costs and mining accidents. In the U.S., the first coal-fired power plant opened on the shores of the lower East River in New York City in September 1882. Today, coal is used to produce nearly 40% of the world's electricity. However, burning coal is one of the most harmful practices on the planet.

[ARTICLE 60](#)

Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2007 Energy Information Administration, December 2008. 64p.

Total U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were 7,282 million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO 2e) in 2007, an increase of 1.4% from the 2006 level according to Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2007, a report released today by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Since 1990, the annual average decline in GHG intensity has been 1.9%.

[ARTICLE 61](#)

The Real Price of Gold by Brook Larmer in *National Geographic*, January 2009.

Humanity's attachment to gold is experiencing a frenetic resurgence, as global economic uncertainty fuels demand for gold, its price having been driven to unprecedented levels. Larmer says that demand for gold in 2007 outstripped mine production by almost 60%. Although investors are flocking to gold-backed funds or buying gold for investment, he reminds that all the richest deposits are being rapidly depleted with most of the remaining deposits are in remote and ecologically fragile regions; and that modern gold mining is highly environmentally destructive, resulting in huge swaths of rainforest being cleared, mountains of tailings and widespread mercury contamination; the rush for gold is fueling conflicts in many developing nations.

[ARTICLE 62](#)

All That Glitters: A Review of Payments for Watershed Services in Developing Countries by Ina Porras et al. *International Institute for Environment*, October 2008. 138p.

A growing international debate calls for downstream beneficiaries of wise upstream land and water use. The report studies in-depth international review and analysis of all accessible ongoing initiatives and advanced proposals for market mechanisms for watershed services.

[ARTICLE 63](#)

Cleaning Up America's Nuclear Weapons Complex: An Update for the States 2008 *National Governors Association*, 8 December, 2008. 40p.

States have made enormous strides treating and disposing of America's Cold War nuclear waste over the past 18 years, but significant challenges and hurdles persist. The report articulates the progress states have made in partnership with the federal government treating, cleaning and disposing of waste throughout America's nuclear weapons complex.

ARTICLE 64

Some environmental online resources which may be of interest:

DOE to Resume Filling Strategic Petroleum Reserve: Oil Acquisition Slated for 2009 *U.S. Dept of Energy*, 2 January, 2009.

A Low Carbon Fuel Standard: State and Federal Legislation and Regulations *Congressional Research Service*, 23 December, 2008.

Up in the Air: Carbon Policies Weigh Environmental and Economic Risks by Betty Joyce Nash. Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, *Region Focus*, Fall 2008. 4p.

Remarks at Signing Ceremony with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Support of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Remarks by U.S. Under Secretary of State Paula J. Dobriansky, 3 December, 2008.

U.S. Department of the Interior Climate Change Task Force Draft Subcommittee Reports December 2008 (with links to the three reports). **News release** 3 December, 2008.

Organic Agriculture in the United States: Program and Policy Issues *CRS*, 25 November, 2008.

Minerals Price Increases and Volatility: Causes and Consequences *CRS*, 3 October, 2008.

The Case Against Government Intervention in Energy Markets by Richard L. Gordon. *Cato Institute*, 1 December, 2008.

Nuclear Energy: Policies and Technology for the 21st Century *Nuclear Energy Advisory Committee*, November 2008.

International Climate Change Programs: Lessons Learned from the European Union's Emission Trading Scheme and the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism *GAO*, November 2008.

A Changed Prognosis for Climate Change Policy Brief by Michael A. Levi. *CFR*, 20 November 20, 2008.

Challenges to Globalizing Natural Gas Backgrounder by Toni Johnson. *CFR*, 8 December, 2008.

Gas Hydrates: Resource and Hazard *CRS*, 26 November, 2008.

The World Bank's Clean Technology Fund (CTF). *CRS*, 24 November, 2008.

World Carbon Dioxide Emissions From the Use of Fossil Fuels *EPA*, December 2008.

Cellulosic Biofuels: Analysis of Policy Issues for Congress *CRS*, 7 November, 2008.

U.S. Participation in Annual Climate Change Conference, in Poznan, December 1-12, 2008 *U.S. Dept of State*, 25 November, 2008 (U.S. delegation outlined).

The U.S. Government's Methane to Markets Partnership Accomplishments Third annual report, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, November 2008. 29p. News Release, 1 December, 2008.

Trends in Emissions of Ozone-Depleting Substances, Ozone Layer Recovery, and Implications for Ultraviolet Radiation Exposure *U.S. Climate Change Science Program*, November 2008. Note: 240p.

Agriculture

Why Aren't Food Companies Reducing Prices? *Renewable Fuels Association*, November 2008. 3p.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for October proves that input costs for food processors are way down but the prices they charge grocery shoppers continue to climb. Prices for virtually everything consumers buy, gasoline, airline tickets, clothing, dropped in October, except food prices. According to a report, the excuse for these price hikes given by big food companies does not pass well, particularly when one considers that these price hikes are not necessary. **ARTICLE 65**

The Politics of Hunger by Paul Collier in *Foreign Affairs*, November-December.

According to Collier, Professor of Economics and Director of the *Center for the Study of African Economies* at Oxford University, policy makers have the power to end the food crisis by bringing food prices down: in the short term by changing regulation to increase supply, in the medium term by encouraging organizational changes to raise the growth of production, and in the long term by encouraging innovations in technology. "Feeding the world will involve three politically challenging steps," Collier says. **ARTICLE 66**

Hunger 2009 *Bread for the World Institute*, 5 December, 2008.

The report calls on the new Congress and President-elect Barack Obama's Administration to rework U.S. foreign assistance to make it more effective in fighting global hunger and poverty. It analyzes the progress that has been made in reducing hunger and poverty over the last few decades and the risk to this progress posed by the impact of high food prices. It draws lessons about what works and what doesn't in the way the U.S. delivers foreign assistance. **ARTICLE 67**

FDA Reports Significant Progress in Protecting the Food Supply FDA news release, 1 December, 2008. **One-year Progress Summary**, December 2008. **Food Protection Plan** November 2007.

Million-Dollar Farms in the New Century *USDA Econ. Research Service*, December 2008. 47p. **Summary**

Fluctuating Food Commodity Prices: A Complex Issue with No Easy Answers U.S. Dept of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *Amber Waves*, November 2008.

Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade *USDA*, 1 December, 2008. 19p.

Genetically Engineered Crops: Agencies are Proposing Changes to Improve Oversight, but Could Take Additional Steps to Enhance Coordination and Monitoring GAO, November 2008. 109p.

Aviation

U.S. International Aviation Policy and Challenges Address by John R. Byerly, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Transportation Affairs, 4 December, 2008.

The World's Top Ten Airport Web Sites *Airfarewatchdog Blog*, 10 December, 2008.

Housing

The Role of the GSEs in Supporting the Housing Recovery Address by U.S. Secretary of Treasury Henry Paulson, 7 January, 2009.

Housing, Mortgage Markets, and Foreclosures Speech by Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, *U.S. Federal Reserve*, 4 December, 2008.

Home Prices Slide Further in Summer Months: Few States Show Price Gains *Federal Housing Finance Agency*, 25 November, 2008.

Federal Programs for Addressing Low-Income Housing Needs: A Policy Primer *The Urban Institute*, December, 2008. 32p. **Summary**

EDUCATION

A New Era in Education: Redefining the Federal Role for the 21st Century. *Office of Advocacy and Issues Management, National School Boards Association.* November 2008. 12p.

The *National School Boards Association (NSBA)* released its vision for “A New Era in Education” to President-elect Barack Obama’s education advisors. The plan details steps for redefining the federal role in education and offers suggestions for how the new Administration can make education an urgent national priority. It recommends an immediate reevaluation of the federal role to better reflect the need to partner with and support states and local school districts in their efforts to prepare all students to succeed in the 21st century economy. This means more than just funding programs directed to students with the greatest needs, but also providing reliable research and best practices linked to improving student achievement. [ARTICLE 68](#)

Reversing Course: The Troubled State of Academic Staffing and a Path Forward. *American Federation of Teachers.* 6 December, 2008. 32p.

More than half of the undergraduate courses at U.S. public colleges and universities are taught by “contingent” faculty and graduate instructors rather than full-time tenured faculty, resulting in an unstable and financially exploited workforce. According to this report, contingent faculty and instructors, including graduate teaching assistants, make up almost 70% of these people teaching in U.S. colleges and universities today. The report also found that contingent faculty members teach nearly 49% of all undergraduate public college courses. Because graduate teaching and research assistants are not counted as college “faculty” in most databases, that figure does not include graduate instructors. When graduate teaching assistants, who teach 16-32% of undergraduate sections at public research universities, are added to the mix, it becomes clear that nonpermanent faculty members instruct well over half of all undergraduate classes. [ARTICLE 69](#)

Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education. *National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education,* 3 December, 2008. 36p.

The study highlights the uneven distribution of higher education opportunity and achievement in the United States. Family wealth and income, race and ethnicity, and geography play too great a role in determining which Americans receive a high school education that prepares them for college, which ones enroll in college, and which ones complete certificate or degree programs. The core message is that despite historical successes in higher education, the preeminence of many U.S. colleges and universities, and some examples of improvement in this decade, higher education performance is not commensurate with the current needs of the society and the economy. [ARTICLE 70](#)

Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools by Robert S. McCord & Noelle M. Ellerson. *American Association of School Administrators,* November 2008. 26p.

School districts in every region of the country are feeling the impact of the economic downturn. The study, based on a survey of school superintendents conducted in October 2008, finds that belt-tightening measures are already underway in districts nationwide in response to shrinking budgets. It also suggests the economic downturn could threaten gains in student achievement and progress in narrowing the achievement gap, which schools have fought so hard to attain, as well as the capacity of schools to deliver essential services. Some of the implementations include altering thermostats (62%), eliminating non-essential travel (57%), reducing staff-level hiring (48%), and reducing consumable supplies (48%). [ARTICLE 71](#)

Strategy Retooled at the Gates by Erik Robelen in *Education Week,* 19 November, 2008.

Over the past eight years, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has spent \$4 billion on education, much of it on a school improvement strategy that has not delivered the academic gains the Foundation hoped for. The Gates Foundation is focusing on “fewer, clearer, and higher” standards for college readiness, better quality teaching and aiding struggling students. Gates believes the U.S. has put too much emphasis on expanding access to higher education and not enough on college completion. The Foundation plans to promote common core standards across states, build the public and political will to achieve college readiness for all, work with school districts to retain and compensate effective teachers in the schools that most need them, and foster technological innovations that will help students who have fallen behind. [ARTICLE 72](#)

China Entices Its Scholars to Come Home by Mara Hvistendahl in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 December, 2008.

Between 1978 and 2005, more than 770,000 Chinese students went abroad but less than one quarter returned to China after completing their studies. Today, Chinese government and private efforts to improve the country's academic environment and reverse this brain drain appear to be succeeding. As part of its effort to create internationally-recognized universities, the government has provided money to top universities specifically for hiring from overseas. University administrators have also been busy recruiting top Chinese-American academics. Chinese universities now offer competitive benefits and salaries to those academics interested in returning from abroad. In 2005, about 35,000 returned, often to positions of leadership and with real power to effect educational reforms. While there are problems, the resentment of locals against returnees who may earn many times more in salary depending on their credentials and professional profile, the "sea turtles," as they are called, are returning home, bringing the American model of education with them. [**ARTICLE 73**](#)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy: Final Rule *U.S. Department of Education*, 9 December, 2008. 51p.

Following the tragic April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech, the U.S. Department of Education published final regulations to clarify and give schools greater flexibility in making determinations about disclosures of information from students' education records in order to address threats to the health or safety of students or other individuals. [**ARTICLE 74**](#)

Educationally/Insufficient *Children Now*, November 2008. 18p.

An Analysis of the Availability & Educational Quality of Children's E/I Programming reveals substantial deficiencies in children's educational television programming and raises serious doubts about broadcasters' commitments to the nation's children. It evaluates the quality of programs claimed as educational/informational (E/I) by commercial stations and found that only one of every eight E/I shows (13%) is rated as "highly educational." In contrast, almost twice as many, nearly one of every four (23%) were classified in the lowest category of "minimally educational." [**ARTICLE 75**](#)

Core Problems: Out-of-Field Teaching Persists in Key Academic Courses and High Poverty Schools by Richard Ingersoll. *Education Trust*, November 2008. 16p.

In America's secondary schools, low-income students and students of color are about twice as likely as other students to be enrolled in core academic classes taught by out-of-field teachers. Out-of-field teachers are those who possess neither certification in the subject they have been assigned to teach nor an academic major in that subject. [**ARTICLE 76**](#)

American Indian and Alaska Native Students and U.S. High Schools *Alliance for Excellent Education*, November 2008. 5p.

An estimated 4.4 million American Indian and Alaska Native people live on the continental U. S. representing 1.5% of the population. They are citizens of the U.S. and many are also citizens of the respective tribal nations to which they belong. Unfortunately, many American Indian and Alaska Native students do not receive the support they deserve from their respective learning communities. The Alliance seeks commitment to ensuring the well-being of these students and the quality of their education, particularly given the clear evidence of striking disparities in their educational achievement and attainment levels. [**ARTICLE 77**](#)

Living and Learning With New Media: A Summary of Findings From the Digital Youth Project *John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation*, November 2008. 58p.

The study shows that America's youth are developing important social and technical skills online, often in ways adults do not understand or value. It shows that spending time online is essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age. [**ARTICLE 78**](#)

Measuring the Status and Change of NAEP State Inclusion Rates for Students with Disabilities *National Center for Education Statistics*, 19 November, 2008. Note: 118p.

Characteristics examined by the report include the type of disability, the severity level of the disability, and whether the student requires accommodations not permitted by *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*. Some students, for example, cannot participate meaningfully in the assessments due to the nature of their disabilities or because their *Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs)* specify an accommodation that is not permitted in NAEP assessments. NAEP used two statistical models, a state-specific and nation-based model, to measure whether these new strategies for inclusion can be reliably associated with higher state-by-state inclusion rates.

ARTICLE 79

Record High Number of American Students Studying Abroad, International Students at U.S. Colleges and Universities *U.S. Department of State*, 17 November, 2008.

International student enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities increased by 7% to a record high. A total of 623,805 international students were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, 6% higher than the previous record high from 2002-2003 and the largest one year jump ever (40,821) in the number of foreign students enrolled. Moreover, U.S. student participation in study abroad was up 8% in 2006-2007 from the previous year, to a new record total of 241,791. The number of Americans studying abroad has increased more than 150% during the past decade.

ARTICLE 80

After Milwaukee: The Most Heralded Experiment in Educational Markets Teaches Us Valuable Lessons by Frederick Hess in *The American*, September/October 2008.

Almost 20 years ago, the Wisconsin legislature enacted the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, allowing a few hundred students to attend local private schools on public scholarships. Today Milwaukee's voucher program enrolls nearly 20,000 students in more than 100 schools, and cities like Youngstown, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., have tried school choice programs on an even larger scale. The results of school choice, however -- even to staunch proponents -- have been disappointing. Yet, with more than one million students now enrolled in charter schools, U.S. Department of Education research shows charter school mean scores in reading and mathematics are lower, on average, than those for public non-charter schools. Hess looks at what went wrong and offers several proposals to overcome the mistakes made.

ARTICLE 81

7 Things You Should Know About Lecture Capture on *Educause.com*, January 2009.

Lecture capture is an umbrella term describing any technology that allows instructors to record what happens in their classrooms and make it available digitally. In its simplest form, it might be an audio recording made with an iPod; alternatively, the term might refer to a software capture program that records cursor movement, typing, or other on-screen activity. Lecture capture systems offer three important benefits: an alternative when students miss class; an opportunity for content review; and content for online course development. Lecture capture enhances and extends existing instructional activities, whether in face-to-face, fully online, or blended learning environments.

ARTICLE 82

Some related online resources which may be of interest:

Addressing the Teacher Qualification Gap: Exploring the Use and Efficacy of Incentives to Reward Teachers for Tough Assignments Report by Dan Goldhaber. *Center for American Progress*, November 3008.

36p. **Summary**

State Education Reforms A website of the *National Center for Education Statistics*, *U.S. Dept of Education*.

Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, December, 2008. 36p. **Summaries**

Expectations and Reports of Homework for Public School Children in the First, Third, and Fifth Grades Issue brief, *National Center for Education Statistics*, *U.S. Dept of Education*, December 2008. 4p.

Job Outlook by Education: 2006-16 U.S. Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Fall 2008.

Cyber Liability and Higher Education *Aon Risk Services*, December 2008. 15p.

AMERICAN SOCIETY

Global Trends in Culture, Infrastructure, and Values by Andy Hines in the *Futurist*, Sept/October 2008.

Hines, director of Custom Projects at Social Technologies in Washington, DC, notes that just a decade or so ago, many were concerned about a homogenized global culture dominated by the U.S. and its powerful entertainment industry. However, local cultures around the world have been more robust than originally thought. He explores ten trends whose influence he believes will grow in the coming decades, including cultural multipolarity; new electronic media, particularly the Internet and mobile phones; the spread of new ideas; electrification; mobility; ethical consumption; women's rights; social freedom; and transparency.

ARTICLE 83

Deepest Cuts: Repairing Health Monitoring Programs Slashed Under the Bush Administration by Miriam Rotkin-Ellman et al. *Natural Resources Defense Council*, December 2008. 42p.

Millions of Americans have been left in the dark about hazardous pollutants being released into their communities, according to the report by the *Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)*. It provides a comprehensive look at the past administration's systemic cutting of health and environmental programs that monitor toxins across America. It also evaluates the current state of federal environmental and health monitoring programs in five key areas, air quality, water quality, food safety, toxic substance and human health.

ARTICLE 84

Ending Child Hunger in America by Joel Berg & Tom Freedman. *Progressive Policy Institute*, 29 Nov'08. 7p.

In the long term, a well-fed population performs better in school, works more productively, and spends less on health care. The authors believe that efforts to end hunger now would also directly improve the economy faster.

ARTICLE 85

2008 Hispanic Policy Agenda *National Hispanic Leadership Agenda*, 2008. 58p.

The *National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA)* platform is comprised by 26 national Hispanic organizations. It is a product of meetings and input from Latino leaders and advocates from around the nation, focuses on civil rights, economic empowerment, education, government accountability, health and immigration not only from the perspective of what is good for the Latino community but what is essential for the nation's future.

ARTICLE 86

Sex, Gender, and Women's Health: Why Women Usually Come Last *Disease Control Priorities Project*, 2 December, 2008. 4p.

Both sex and gender matter in health. Researchers have found that women's biology, their genetic makeup, physiology, or hormones, seems to have more influence on the onset and progression of diseases than gender. But gender differences in society influence whether women recognize their symptoms and act on them, whether they can seek and obtain quality health care, and how well they comply with treatment. ARTICLE 87

Emerging Infections: A Perpetual Challenge by David Morens et al. *National Institute of Health*, 25 November, 2008. 10p.

The phenomenon of widespread, socially disruptive disease outbreaks has a long history prior to HIV/AIDS, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), H5N1 avian influenza and other emerging diseases of the modern era, according to the authors. There are common determinants of disease emergence that transcend time, place and human progress. A better understanding of these determinants is essential to preparing for the next emerging or re-emerging disease that will inevitably confronts the world. ARTICLE 88

Serving People in Need, Safeguarding Religious Freedom: Recommendations for the New Administration on Partnerships With Faith-Based Organizations by E.J. Dionne, Jr. & Melissa Rogers. *Brookings*, December 2008. 58p.

One of President-elect Barack Obama's distinctive contributions to the nation's political debate is his call for a more productive, inclusive and open discussion of issues at the intersection of faith and public life. The authors suggest that there is much common ground. Heavy stress is laid on the history of cooperation between religious institutions and government.

ARTICLE 89

Immigration and the Macroeconomy by Federico S. Mandelman & Andrei Zlate. *Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta*, November 2008. 49p.

The study analyzes the dynamics of labor migration and the insurance role of remittances in a two-country, real business cycle framework. Emigration increases with the expected stream of future wage gains but is dampened by the sunk cost reflecting border enforcement. During booms in the destination economy, the scarcity of established immigrants lessens capital accumulation, labor productivity, and the native wage. The welfare gain from the inflow of unskilled labor increases with the complementarity between skilled and unskilled labor and the share of the skilled among native labor.

ARTICLE 90

Memo To President-Elect Obama: Make U.S. HIV/AIDS Money More Effective By Releasing Data by Nandini Oomman. *Center for Global Development*, 1 December, 2008.

The Center for Global Development suggests that the new administration move quickly to publicly release data from the *President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)*. Releasing funding and programmatic data, which have already been collected at tax payer expense, would make possible informed analysis on the impact of the billions of dollars that the U.S. spends to help developing countries address the pandemic, and thereby help to increase the impact of spending going forward.

ARTICLE 91

The Movement of Illegal Guns in America *Mayors Against Illegal Guns*, December 2008. 40p.

The report reveals previously unreported trends in the movement of illegal guns across state lines. The report analyzes state-by-state 2006 and 2007 trace data released by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) finding that states that supply interstate crime guns at the highest rates have comparatively weak gun laws.

ARTICLE 92

Rethinking Death: States Form Commissions to Study Capital Punishment by Jennifer Horne Boyter in *State News*, September 2008. 4p.

The increase in exonerations due to new DNA evidence has led many states to re-examine the way their criminal justice systems handle capital punishment cases. Illinois took the lead in 2000, when then-Governor George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions, stating that he had "grave concerns" about the "state's shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row."

ARTICLE 93

Some related online resources which may be of interest:

Americans Claim to Like Diverse Communities But Do They Really? *Pew Research Center*, 2 Dec'08.

AIDS.gov *U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS)* - blogs, virtual worlds and social networks deliver HIV information.

Participation in Self-Help Groups for Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use: 2006 and 2007 Report of the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)*, *U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services*, 13 November, 2008. **Summary**

Annual Report to the Nation Finds Decline in Cancer Incidence and Death Rates: News Release, *National Institutes of Health*, 25 November, 2008 (with links to data).

How is a Shortage of Primary Care Physicians Affecting the Quality and Cost of Health Care? A Comprehensive Evidence Review White paper, *American College of Physicians*, 2008. 71p. **News Release** 8 November, 2008.

Emerging Infections: A Perpetual Challenge by David M. Morens et al. in *The Lancet*, Nov'08. 10p.

BUSINESS

The Digital Road to Recovery: A Stimulus Plan to Create Jobs, Boost Productivity and Revitalize America by Robert Atkinson et al. *ITIF*, 7 January, 2009.

As Congress considers a substantial stimulus package to get the economy moving, investing in new economy digital infrastructures will provide significant opportunities not just for short-term stimulus and job creation, but also longer term economic and social benefits. *ITIF* provides a detailed analysis and estimate of the short-term jobs impacts of spurring investment in three critical digital networks: broadband networks, the smart grid (making the electric distribution system intelligent) and health IT, and outlines policy steps to spur this investment. The authors find that investments in America's digital infrastructure will spur significant job creation in the short run. Specifically, they estimate that spurring an additional investment of \$30 billion in America's IT network infrastructure in 2009 will create approximately 949,000 U.S. jobs. [ARTICLE 94](#)

The Job Impact of the American Recovery and Investment Plan by Christina Romer & Jared Bernstein. Office of the President-Elect, 9 January, 2009.

A key goal enunciated by the President-Elect concerning the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan is that it should save or create at least 3 million jobs by the end of 2010. The authors undertook a preliminary analysis of the jobs effects of some of the prototypical recovery packages being discussed, saying this analysis will surely evolve, and change as the parameters are determined in cooperation with the Congress. Nevertheless, this report suggests a methodology for ensuring that the package contains enough stimulus that we can have confidence that it will create sufficient jobs to meet the President-Elect's goals. [ARTICLE 95](#)

Global Migration of the Highly Skilled: A Tentative and Quantitative Approach by Theo Dunnewijk. *United Nations University*, 24 November, 2008. 32p.

Migration in a globalizing world is on the increase, especially that of the highly skilled. When the better educated leave their country in large quantities to try their chances abroad it was labeled in the 1960's as 'brain drain' stressing the negative welfare impact on the countries of origin (European at that time). However not always is the impact of migration negative for the country of origin and therefore 'brain drain' turned into 'brain gain' when seen from another perspective. The road in the middle is called 'brain strain' emphasizing that out migration can be either positive or negative for the origin countries. A synthesis has been found in perceiving migration of the highly skilled in the more neutral phrase 'brain circulation'. [ARTICLE 96](#)

Unions and Upward Mobility for Women Workers by John Schmitt. *Center for Economic and Policy Research*, December 2008. 10p.

The study documents a large wage and benefit advantage for women workers in unions relative to their non-union counterparts. It finds that unionized women workers earned, on average, 11.2 percent more than their non-union peers. In addition, women in unions were much more likely to have health insurance benefits and a pension plan. [ARTICLE 97](#)

The Best Social Enterprises of the Year 2009 in *Fast Company*, January.

Fast Company has found them: Nine bold and timely ideas that wow us, and that have earned these organizations a place alongside Enterprise Community Partners on our honor roll of 2009 *Social Enterprises of the Year*. Will all of these notions work in the long run and on a grand scale? Perhaps not. But they represent the kind of innovative thinking that can transform lives and change our world. [ARTICLE 98](#)

Some related online resources which may be of interest:

[12 Most Creative Minds of 2008](#) *Fast Company* [Top 10 Industries to Start and Grow a Business](#) *Inc.com*

[Executive Compensation](#): *U.S. House Committee on Financial Services*.

[The Employment Situation: November 2008](#) Hearing, *Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress*, Dec'08.

MEDIA

Cultural Conundrum: News Outlets Struggle to Find a Place for International Cultural Stories by Hsin-Yin Lee in the *Global Journalist*, Fall 2008.

Reporting on cultural events is a hard sell for overseas media outlets unless the topic directly relates to a bilateral relationship or a "hard news" interest, such as Japanese reporters in Washington covering the annual Cherry Blossom festival or American reporters writing about Middle Eastern culture due to some connection with the war on terror. But cultural reporting is important as a means of understanding "how people in other countries work, think, dream and worry." Lee says that language barriers and other obstacles should be overcome in order to improve this aspect of communication. In doing so, universal themes and truths can be discovered and encouraged which would increase mutual understanding.

[ARTICLE 99](#)

Lost in Cyberspace: Is There A Way Out? by Yoani Sanchez in the *Global Journalist*, Summer 2008.

Sanchez, a 'Generation Y' Cuban journalist who blogs from Havana, says despite that the limited availability of Internet access in the country, the Web is helping to spur an end to years of public silence about Cuba's problems and unfulfilled promises. She relates how her posts are "marked by some emotional outbursts that serious newspapers would never publish," and how change, rather than coming from the top, is being "loosened" from the inside. She concludes that the homogeneity and sloganeering of the official press and the Cuban state's monopoly on information is currently being lost "once and for all."

[ARTICLE 100](#)

Faith & Ecstasy by Nicholas Schmidle in the *Smithsonian*, December 2008.

Most Western media coverage of Islam in recent years has focused on fundamentalists, their strict beliefs, and their link to terrorism. But less attention has been paid to Sufism, which represents the mystical side of Islam - a personal experience with Allah, instead of the doctrinal approach of fundamentalists like the Taliban. The author says that Sufis represent the strongest indigenous force against Islamic fundamentalism and that while the West has attempted to counter fundamentalism with public diplomacy, interfaith dialogues and other efforts, it has failed to recognize the counterterrorist power that lies in Sufism. A tradition started by a group of 13th-century mystics, Sufism has many devotees today in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, the home of the family of the assassinated Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. One Sufi interviewed by the author believes that the "spirit of Qalandar resided in Bhutto, and lives on in her son."

[ARTICLE 101](#)

Endangered Species by Jennifer Dorroh in *American Journalism Review*, Dec'08/January 2009.

Under pressure to cut costs, more newspapers are cutting their Washington bureaus. And while the reporters experienced at covering the nation's capital proceed to find jobs with niche markets, they are no longer informing the general public. The sad outcome endangers American democracy, experts say, because only those in power are informed about what is happening and how to control it. Others say that those most interested in politics can get all the information they need from issue-oriented organizations, Internet sources and the contributions of online "citizen journalists."

[ARTICLE 102](#)

Investing in the Future by Barb Palser in *American Journalism Review*, 14 January.

News outlets that enhance their Web operations in tough times will reap benefits. [ARTICLE 103](#)

Lessons From the Trail by Phyllis Kaniss in *American Journalism Review*, 14 January.

What metro newspapers can learn from Barack Obama's victory - as the day after Barack Obama's election, it was as if Americans had suddenly rediscovered the worth of newspapers, as people everywhere clamored to get their hands on a commemorative front page heralding the election of the nation's first African American President. Kaniss says it would be wise for newspaper management to look at the deeper implications of Obama's victory for their long-term survival, as there are lessons here.

[ARTICLE 104](#)

Media Shift from War to Washington by Mark Jurkowitz. *Pew Research Center*, 13 January, 2009.

War in Gaza Quickly Shifts News: Media Themselves Become Another Front in Middle East War by Mark Jurkowitz. *Pew Research Center*, 7 January, 2009.

COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Google's Gatekeepers by Jeffrey Rosen in *New York Times Magazine*, November 30, 2008.

The author, a law professor at George Washington University, notes that even though the Web might seem like a free-speech panacea, there is less focus on how the Internet is actually regulated, and by whom. As more and more speech migrates online, the ultimate power to decide who has an opportunity to be heard, and what people may say, lies increasingly with Internet service providers, search engines, and other Internet companies like Google. With control of two-thirds of the world's Internet searches, as well as ownership of YouTube, Google has enormous influence over who can find an audience on the Web; it has adopted a decision-making process about what controversial user-generated content stays up or comes down on YouTube and other applications owned by Google. Google's increasing role in policing content on its applications is also working at cross-purposes with many national governments, which are also blocking access to YouTube, such as recent incidents in Thailand and Turkey.

ARTICLE 105

Nets of Terror: Terrorist Activity on the Internet by Paul Piper in *Searcher*, November/December 2008.

The author, a reference librarian at Western Washington University, provides a detailed overview of the presence and activity of terrorist groups on the Internet. He notes that rogue groups are drawn to the Internet because it is easy and inexpensive to communicate and disseminate information instantaneously and in an uncensored fashion worldwide. Terrorist groups use the Internet for a variety of purposes, chiefly for public announcements, data mining, recruitment, fundraising, information sharing, logistics and training. Terrorist websites, chat rooms, bulletin boards and forums are very unstable, with continually changing URLs, due to the cat-and-mouse game with authorities and private watchdog groups. The author describes and gives the website URLs of the many organizations keeping track of terrorist groups, as well as a complete listing of terrorist groups by country, with the most recently known web URLs. He believes that the terrorist presence on the Internet is still in a beginning phase, aimed mostly at staking out territory, but may eventually lead to cyberterrorism.

ARTICLE 106

Working in Wiki by Ellen Perlman & Melissa Maynard in *Governing*, May 2008.

Web 2.0 is a new generation of Internet applications that consist of social networking tools, including websites like Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Second Life and Wikipedia. The authors write that state and local government have begun utilizing these social networking tools, and that they can transform the way government functions. As opposed to the current top-down culture of emails, briefings and conferences, Web 2.0 encourages a more democratic approach, improving the efficiency of the organization. Success in implementing Web 2.0 in government also requires employees to select what aspect of a project they want to work on. The authors say that Web 2.0 is inevitable for government saying that "Governments can either play an active role in transforming themselves or wait and let change hit them; either way, it's coming."

ARTICLE 107

Why I Blog by Andrew Sullivan in the *Atlantic*, November, 2008.

Sullivan describes the evolution of his blogging, which he began in 2000. He outlines the many challenges he has faced and lessons he has learned from this new medium, the immediacy of which cannot be rivaled by print, changing the way reporting works.

ARTICLE 108

Some online resources which may be of interest:

Remarks by FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate at the Practicing Law Institute on Telecom Policy and Regulation 5 December, 2008. 19p. (on U.S. telecommunications policy). The speaker is one of five Commissioners who make up the *Federal Communications Commission (FCC)*.

Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, November 2008. 58p.

Voice, Video, and Broadband: The Changing Competitive Landscape and its Impact on Consumers U.S. Dept of Justice, November 2008. 114p. **Summary** 2p.

Online Threats to Youth: Solicitation, Harassment, and Problematic Content Literature review by the Research Advisory Board of the Internet Safety Technical Task Force, draft, 14 November, 2008. 87p.

THE ARTS & CULTURE

State Arts Policy: Trends and Future Prospects by Julia Lowell. *RAND*, 24 November, 2008. 44p.

State arts agencies, key players within the U.S. system of public support for the arts, face growing economic, political, and demographic challenges to the roles and missions they adopted when founded in the mid-60s. The report looks at state arts agencies' efforts to rethink their roles and missions, reflecting on what the changes may mean for the direction of state arts policy. Drawing on readings, discussions, and analyses conducted for the study, the author concludes that if current trends and strategies continue, future state arts policy is likely to focus more on developing the creative economy, improving arts education, and encouraging a broader spectrum of state residents to participate in the arts.

ARTICLE 109

The 21st Century Writer by Patrick Tucker in the *Futurist*, July/August 2008.

Tucker says that for writers and readers, these are times of upheaval, with the information technology revolution leading to an explosion in written content. For book publishers, the mission is to reinvent the concept of the book for the digital age. For many writers, particularly nonfiction writers, it means joining the online world of blogs, vlogs, and RSS feeds where the pace of news is accelerated. Across the U.S. newspapers and magazines are focusing their resources on their Web sites. In the process, they're giving voice to an entirely new breed of digital journalist even as they show the door to news department veterans. Many writers are justifiably alarmed by the shift, but writers who are eager to incorporate new technology into the writing process, have a bright future.

ARTICLE 110

International Grantmaking IV: Highlights. *Foundation Center*, 5 December, 2008. 12p.

Estimated U.S. foundation giving for international purposes reached a record \$5.4 billion in 2007, and 2008 giving is likely to top that record. The prospects for international giving in the near term are also less pessimistic than current market conditions might suggest. "The single most important message from this study is that international grantmaking is here to stay," says Foundation Center President Bradford K. Smith. "More U.S. foundations are spending more resources on international problems, challenges, and opportunities than at any time in history."

ARTICLE 111

Women Artists: 1990 to 2005 *National Endowment for the Arts*, December 2008. 17p.

State Arts Policy: Trends and Future Prospects by Julia F. Lowell. *RAND*, 2008. 44p. **Brief summary** Role & mission of U.S. state government arts agencies in promoting the arts.

SCIENCE AND SPACE

Triple Helix: A New Molecule of Life by Peter Nielsen in *Scientific American*, December 2008.

Peptide nucleic acid, a synthetic hybrid of protein and DNA, could form the basis of a new class of drugs, and of artificial life unlike anything found in nature. A synthetic molecule called peptide nucleic acid (PNA) combines the information-storage properties of DNA with the chemical stability of a protein-like backbone. Drugs based on PNA could achieve therapeutic effects.

ARTICLE 112

Review of Federal Strategy for Nanotechnology-Related Environmental, Health, and Safety Research *National Academies Press*, 2008. 97p.

University-Private Sector Research Partnerships in the Innovation Ecosystem Report of the *President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology*, November 2008. 92p.

The International Space Station and the Space Shuttle *CRS*, 3 November, 2008.

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